

REMARKS

Entry of the above amendments, and early and favorable consideration on the merits are respectfully requested. Upon entry of this Preliminary Amendment, claims 41-53 will be pending, with claims 41, 49, and 53 being independent claims.

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

If any questions remain, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact Applicants' representative, John T. Whelan, at (301) 428-7172 prior to taking action on the application.

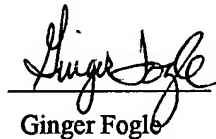
Respectfully Submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231 on October 08, 2002.


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VERSION WITH CHANGES MARKEDIN THE SPECIFICATION:

--This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of the filing date of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/248,338, filed February 11, 1999, now U.S. Patent No. 6,370,669, and under 35 U.S.C. § 1.19(e) of the filing dates of U.S. Provisional Application Nos. 60/072,368, filed January 23, 1998, now abandoned, 60/074,932, filed February 17, 1998, now abandoned, 60/075,742, filed February 23, 1998, now abandoned, and 60/076,464, filed March 2, 1998, now abandoned, the entire content of each of these provisional applications are incorporated herein by reference.--